

NRCS at a Glance

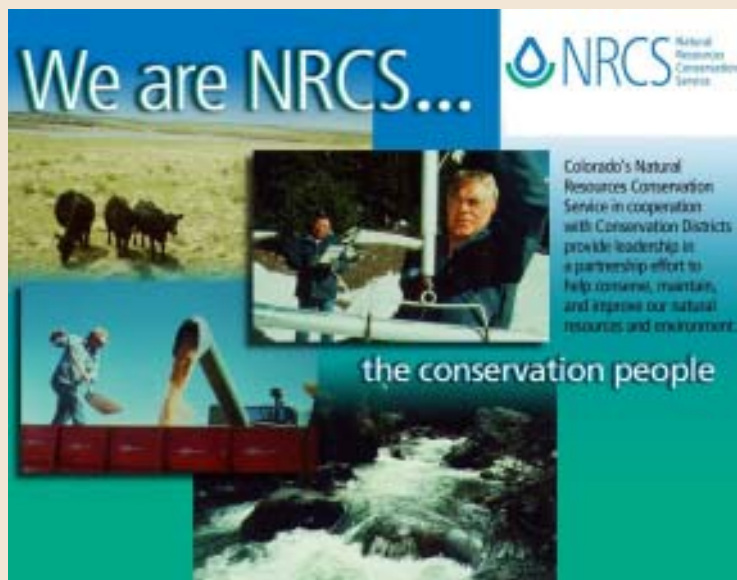


photo: USDA

NRCS Mission—

To provide leadership and administer programs to help people conserve, improve, and sustain our natural resources and environment

NRCS Vision—

A productive nation in harmony with a quality environment

The Agency

The **Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)** is the U.S. Department of Agriculture's lead conservation agency that addresses the health and well-being of soil, water, air, plants, and animals. ***No other Federal agency speaks for the health and fate of America's private land.***

NRCS works hand-in-hand with the American people to conserve natural resources on private land. We help land users approach conservation planning and implementation with an understanding of how natural resources relate to each other and to all of us, and how our activities affect those resources.

Formerly the Soil Conservation Service, NRCS was created as a national response to the Dust Bowl catastrophe of the 1930s.

NRCS Services and Products

NRCS employees and volunteers provide services and products to managers and owners of private land that help them to make informed land use decisions.

Most work is done with local partners. Our partnership with local conservation districts serves almost every county in the nation, and the Caribbean and Pacific Basin. Participation in our programs is voluntary.

NRCS provides both financial and technical assistance to private landowners. Local, state, and Federal agencies and policymakers also rely on our expertise. We deliver technical assistance based on sound science and suited to a customer's specific needs.

In addition to conservation programs NRCS also provides Resource and Technological information including the **National Resource Inventories** and assessments that NRCS conducts to indicate status, conditions, and trends of natural resources on private lands, and **Snow Survey and Water Forecasting Data**.

Technical and Financial Assistance

Technical assistance for conservation planning is available to help customers decide what conservation practices and systems will best address natural resource concerns and meet their economic goals. This planning assistance ranges from a site-specific plan to one that covers a larger geographic area.

Technical and financial assistance are available to help customers apply planned conservation practices and systems. This assistance includes designs, specifications, construction and management assistance, as well as cost-share assistance to install practices and systems.

A Staff of Technically Sound, Field-Based Employees

The strength of NRCS is its workforce—the men and women who work side-by-side with the owners and managers of America's privately owned land. These are the NRCS employees who have the technical expertise and field experience to help land users solve their natural resource challenges and to maintain and improve their ability to thrive

photo: USDA

economically. NRCS employees are highly skilled in many scientific and technical specialties including soil science, soil conservation, agronomy, biology, agro-ecology, range conservation, forestry, engineering, geology, hydrology, cultural resources, and economics.

Farmers and Ranchers Aren't the Only Ones Who Benefit

Ultimately, every person who drinks water and eats food benefits from the work NRCS does. The benefits translate beyond a landscape into benefits to rural communities. Studies have shown that every dollar NRCS invests in technical and financial assistance to improve natural resources triggers a stimulus for rural economies and the people of Colorado, including:

- ◆ Farmers, ranchers, and others who manage privately owned land
- ◆ Water management groups
- ◆ Rural and urban community leaders and members
- ◆ Local and state government elected and appointed officials
- ◆ Other individuals, groups, and associations with an interest in or focus on natural resource issues

Partners

NRCS collaborates with many partners to set conservation goals, to provide the maximum technical assistance to people who work the land, and to leverage the Federal contributions to natural resource conservation on private lands. These partners include:

- ◆ Conservation districts
- ◆ County governments
- ◆ State agencies and other Federal agencies
- ◆ NRCS Earth Team volunteers
- ◆ Agricultural and environmental groups
- ◆ Professional societies

Colorado's 77 conservation districts—virtually one in every county and on some Indian reservations—take a special place in the partnership and the natural resource conservation delivery system. As units of local government, conservation districts operate on the premise that local people know the most about local natural resource needs. Conservation districts link NRCS to local communities and to local priorities for natural resource conservation.

The **State Technical Committee in Colorado** consists of more than 70 members and fulfills a key partnership and advisory function. These individuals provide information, analyses, and recommendations on implementing **U.S. Department of Agriculture** conservation programs. Membership on the committee is open to representatives of private organizations and businesses, state, and Federal agencies, and individuals who are knowledgeable about or who have expertise in natural resources conservation.

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